

# SANITARY COMMISSION.

No. 48.

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SANITARY COMMISSION, NEW YORK AGENCY, }  
No. 498 Broadway, Sept 24, 1862. }

The Sanitary Commission is daily answering the requirements of eighty General Military Hospitals, not to speak of Regimental and other Hospitals. Of these, forty-seven hospitals, containing twenty thousand sick or wounded men, are in the District of Columbia. Whatever the surgeons want, which they cannot procure according to regulations, of the United States Purveyors, they can get from us, and they want enough to keep our vast storehouses continually on the drain. Joined to this, the recent successive weeks of battle, first before Richmond, adding 5,000 wounded, at Bull Run 6,000 wounded, and now in Maryland from 7,000 to 10,000 wounded to the list, have thrown an immense strain on our resources. Our independent means of transportation often enable us to reach the wounded with stores in advance of all Government or other supplies. The first *two* days are more important than the next ten to the saving of life and the relief of misery.

At the recent battle-ground we were able to be present in advance, two days, of all supplies (beyond the small amount in the nearly empty storehouse of the army Medical Purveyor), with twenty-five wagon-loads of stimulants, condensed food, medicines, and conveniences. Within a week we dispatched successfully, by teams, to the scene of battle, from Washington alone, 28,763 pieces dry-goods, shirts, towels, bed-ticks, pillows,

&c., 30 barrels bandages, old linen, &c., 3,188 pounds farina, &c. ; 2,620 pounds condensed milk, 5,050 pounds beef-stock and canned meats, 3,000 bottles wine and cordials, and several tons of lemons and other fruit, crackers, tea, sugar, rubber-cloth, tin cups, and hospital conveniences. Great and constant, therefore, as the supplies of our Central Auxiliary Association are, and of the towns and villages on which they depend, they ought not to be surprised to learn that our Washington storehouses are bare of shirts, drawers, slippers, socks, bed-sacks, blankets, and old clothing, and that only the ceaseless and increased activity and humanity of our women can be depended on to meet the new demand.

To Societies having a hundred women at command, and engaging to supply us promptly with articles to our order, we will, until the urgency of the call is over, supply materials for shirts and drawers and stockings at our discretion. Application must be made for the materials by agents from the Societies, *in person*, at No. 498 Broadway, New York.

Of course, *this* is not the perfect support we want. Patriotism should inspire communities to supply their own materials, as well as their own work. There is no danger that the work will be overdone. It has always been checked by that fear; but our experience has perfectly proved that the demand is greater than the supply. Let the homes of the land abandon the preparation of comforts and packages for *individual* soldiers. They only load down and embarrass him. If they contain eatables they commonly spoil; if they do not spoil, they enervate the soldier; if made up of extra clothing they crush him on the march. All this kindness kills, and helps fill the hospitals. The benevolence of the country must be exclusively concentrated on the hospitals and the sick and wounded. These cannot be taken too much care of, nor nursed too well. Supplies

*can positively be made to reach these*; they cannot reach with any certainty soldiers in the field; and the ill name suffered by those who, like ourselves, are ministering to the hospitals, for non-delivery of the goods sent us, is wholly due to confounding the failure of irresponsible parties to deliver things kindly, but mischievously, intended for *well* men, with (what does not occur) our alleged failure to transmit everything sent us to the hospitals where they are needed. Of a *million* articles sent us, we defy any scrutiny to prove a hundred lost. The reports of the men returning from the field, saying that they have *bought* our stores, shirts, drawers, &c., are based on the fact that after these supplies *have done their work*, they may, in some cases, be sold by the soldiers to whom they were given, and who cannot, as convalescents, carry them. No sick soldier ever bought a single article from any agent of ours.

It is impossible on our system, and is utterly false. Base men may claim the name of our agents, but we have no base men in our employ. The agents in our employ have proved their worth by laying down their health, almost without exception, and in some cases their lives, in our exacting and exposed service.

Our books, methods, returns are always open to the unshackled inspection of the public, and we have no desire so strong, as for unsparing and merciless examination of our work.

Our expenses, both in money and administration, are necessarily very large, and always increasing. California has sent us a magnificent donation. But it would be a prodigious mistake to withhold the money liberality of our older cities on that account. If our usual income from the wealth of the North were cut off by this great windfall, San Francisco would prove, in three months, our ruin instead of our support. Send in then, steadily, supplies and money! Only a great accumulation of both can give us the confidence to act with the energy

and liberality which are the conditions of our humane success. The letters and papers published herewith will indicate the nature and extent of that portion of the work of the Commission which is performed on the battle ground.

In behalf of the Executive Committee,

HENRY W. BELLOWS,  
President.

I.—REPORT OF W. M. CHAMBERLAIN, M. D., *Inspector.*

To J. F. JENKINS, M. D.,

Assistant Secretary of Sanitary Commission, &c.,

For the Army of the Potomac :

Sir,—On Thursday, September 18th, I was requested by Mr. Olmsted to visit Philadelphia, and do whatever might be required in expediting the sending of supplies to the battle-field, with authority to proceed thither if it should seem desirable to do so.

Arriving in Philadelphia at fifteen minutes before 12, midnight, I took a carriage to the rooms of the Commission, (1235 Chesnut street.) Half an hour was consumed in the effort to wake some one in the building. Thence I went to the residence of Mr. Ashurst, whose address Mr. Bloor had given me, and after a like delay, found that he was not in town. Thence to the residence of Mr. C. J. Stille, whom I succeeded in finding. From him I learned that a large invoice of stores had been that afternoon dispatched *via* Harrisburgh, in charge of Dr. Corse, and consigned to Dr. E. A. Crane, Insp. San. Com., at Chambersburgh, and that eight barrels of wine, five of whiskey, and one large cask of brandy had been forwarded to the same address, in charge of Adams's Express.

Mr. Stille also told me that Dr. Corse had received five hundred dollars to distribute in whatever way might be needed to hasten the transit of the stores to the field, and to increase the comforts of the wounded.

He earnestly requested me to proceed at once to Chambersburgh and aid Drs. Crane and Corse in these matters.

While conferring with Mr. Stille, he received a telegram from Mr. Olmsted, advising that no further supplies should be sent *via* Chambersburgh, on account of obstructions to transportation in the railroad. In accordance with Mr. Stille's request, I left at 11 A. M. on Friday for Chambersburgh, and reaching Harrisburgh at 4 P. M., found that there was no train to be sent that day to Chambersburgh. At seven P. M., however, orders were received to send forward to Hagerstown two regiments of Pennsylvania State Militia, and I procured a passage with them.

Our train passed the junction rapidly, and I was not able to get off, but proceeded with it to Hagerstown, which was reached at 9 A. M. on Saturday. During the transit, I was interested in observing the character and

spirit of the regiment with which I was travelling. The nucleus, and a considerable portion of the body of it, was from the Custom House, and other Government offices of Philadelphia. The officers were men of gentlemanly manners, and general intelligence, of mature age, and good social position. The regiment had been enrolled, quartered, and equipped in three days, largely from the private means of the officers and their friends in Philadelphia.

They had taken arms in response to Gov. Curtin's call upon the people for the defence of the border. They were well armed and equipped, and apparently unanimous in saying that they would go where they might be sent, and stay even to the end of the war, if desired.

At Hagerstown I found Dr. Crane, and, conferring with him, it was agreed between us, that he should return to Chambersburgh to meet Dr. Corse, and forward the stores to me at Hagerstown. Accordingly he left at 3 P. M. on Saturday upon that errand.

I found also Dr. A. K. Smith, U. S. A., at Hagerstown, having just arrived, with authority from the Surgeon-General to assume control of all hospitals and hospital stores, and all regimental, State, and volunteer surgeons at that point. He had established hospitals in a Lyceum Hall, the Court-House and the Washington Hotel, and was expecting the arrival of a large supply of Government medical stores, which left Philadelphia a few hours in advance of those of the Commission.

He had already dispatched about 150 slightly wounded men by railroad to Harrisburgh, and had about the same number remaining in hospitals, who were dependent upon the charity of the citizens of Hagerstown and vicinity for their food, beyond regular army rations, and for all other stores. The people of the place responded nobly to the call, and kind men and women, bringing bread, tea, and soup, &c., were constantly passing in and out of the hospitals. Many straw mattresses had thus been supplied, and mechanics were making rude bedsteads for them. There seemed to be no lack of surgical supplies (strictly), but from what source they came I did not learn.

The medical corps was Drs. Smith, Palmer, and Rogers—an insufficient number—but upon Sunday Dr. Greenleaf, U. S. A., and others, were added to it. I thought the best use of my time would be to visit the field, and learn how and where I might make them available when they should arrive. Accordingly, I left at noon on Saturday, and went by the Sharpsburgh pike to the right of the battle-field, where I met Dr. Leland, of the 2d Mass. Regiment, attached to the hospital of Banks' *corps d'armée*, who told me that there were nearly 10,000 of the wounded of

both armies lying in field depots at and about the houses and barns, from one-half to three miles in the rear of the battle-field, in a semi-circle from near Williamsport around to the mouth of Antietam creek, wanting supplies of all kinds, none being at hand except those carried with the marching regiments, and such as could be obtained from the neighborhood. From the portions of the field that I visited the wounded had all been removed, but the hundreds of dead were lying where they fell, while the Irish brigade were engaged in collecting and burying them. Upon the field to which I went the mortality among the Confederates had been dreadful, and I could not understand why it had apparently been much less to our forces. Upon one spot Hooker's corps had advanced over a rounded swell of land, upon the rebel line lying upon the ground beneath a rail fence. Our line must have been relieved against the sky beyond, while their foes were prostrated and sheltered, and assimilating in their dirty clothing the color of the ground upon which they lay, yet the havoc among our men, though great, did not equal the continuous rank of dead which lay behind the fence, which was riddled with musket balls.

I noticed that decomposition was proceeding much more rapidly among the Confederate dead than among ours, and conjectured that it might be due to the restricted use of salt with their food.

From the field I returned at 9 P. M. to Hagerstown, and found that no supplies had as yet arrived either from Government or the Commission.

On Sunday morning Dr. Crane telegraphed that they had not yet reached Chambersburgh, and later that the liquors sent by Adams & Co. had come in and would be directly sent down.

In my frequent visits to the railroad I had noticed a pile of boxes containing blankets (36 each), and a few miscellaneous cases marked "Lint, Bandages, Old Linen Shirts, Drawers," &c. These were all addressed to General R. J. Hall, Quartermaster-General of the State of Pennsylvania—the blankets being from the Quartermaster's Department, U. S. A., and the miscellaneous articles from the "Soldiers' Aid Societies" in the State of Pennsylvania.

I applied to Dr. A. K. Smith, Medical Director, for permission to seize these and convey them to the field hospitals, which he granted. The order to this effect I then took to Brigadier-General Reynolds, commanding at Hagerstown, and procured his endorsement thereon. I then called upon him for transportation, and received a note to Capt. Weeks, Quartermaster and A. D. C., desiring him to aid me in procuring it. I then dispatched Mr. Corson, a gentleman from Philadelphia, who had accompanied me from Harrisburgh into the country about Hagerstown, to beg or hire, at any

price asked, conveyances to the field. The Quartermaster had been for two days pressing everything of the sort, having patrolled with cavalry the whole vicinity. The demand for wagons was constant and from all quarters. No sooner was one brought in than numerous applicants claimed it from the Quartermaster for forage, for ammunition, for commissary stores, &c., &c. Leaving Mr. E. T. Ellis at the Quartermaster's office to defend and prosecute our claim to wagons, I went another way into the country to look for them—and obtained one small one—which I immediately loaded with blankets, and bandages, &c., bought wine and whiskey and dispatched them by the owner of the wagon, to the care of the surgeon in charge of hospitals at Keedysville.

About 2 P. M. our liquors arrived, and I succeeded in getting two army wagons captured from Jackson's ammunition train. These I loaded with blankets and miscellaneous stores and placed a large cask of whiskey and two barrels of sherry wine in them, and at 7 P. M. started for the field, accompanied Mr. E. F. Ellis, Mr. Smith of Philadelphia, and Mr. Coleman of Lebanon, who had come on to do whatever they could for the wounded.

We were furnished with an escort of two cavalry men by General Reynolds, and reached the Hospital of Banks' Army Corps about 12 midnight, where we gave out blankets to the wounded lying upon the ground who needed them.

The night being dark and there being but a track through fields thence to the Hospitals, we were obliged to suspend operations for the night, but resumed them at daylight, visiting successively—

(1.)	Hospital in charge of Dr. Knight.....	containing 57 patients.	
(2.)	“ “ “ “ Dr. Chappel.....	“ 220 “	
	(Banks' Army Corps.)		
(3.)	“ “ “ “ Dr. Hayward, 13th Mass. “	90 “	
(4.)	White-House Hosp. Dr. King, Penn. Reserve “	850 “	
(5.)	Smoketown Hosp., Dr. Vandegriff, 102 N. Y. “	221 “	
(6.)	Brick-House Hosp., Dr. Heywood, 20th Mass. “	1400 “	approximate.
(7.)	Hospital of Dr. Dana, 107th Pa. Vols.....	“ 25 “	
(8.)	“ “ Dr. Reno.....	“ 32 “	
(9.)	Valley-Mills Hospital, Dr. Wilcox.....	“ 200 “	
(10.)	Sedgewick's Div. Hosp.....	“ 280 “	
(11.)	Brick-Church Hospital, Dr. Perkins.....	“ 40 “	
(12.)	School-House “ Dr. Pinkney.....	“ 46 “	
(13.)	Old Mill “ Dr. Atkinson.....	“ 160 “	
(14.)	Brown-House “ Dr. Chamberlain.....	“ 35 “	

To each of these hospitals we issued as much wine and whiskey as the surgeons in charge desired, and a modicum—distressingly inadequate in most cases—of shirts, drawers, blankets, bandages, old linen, cushions, pads, farinaceous food, &c., &c., meeting every where the most eager welcome, and blessings on the Sanitary Commission. When we left No. 14 our stock was exhausted, except the second cask of sherry wine, and we were obliged to turn away, leaving many more hospitals, some upon the most hotly contested fields, unvisited. Those upon the right of the field had not, when we visited them, received any thing from any source, except the neighbors, while those upon the left had been visited and partially supplied from several sources. About the middle of the day we met a train of Government hospital stores coming in from the direction of Boonesboro', while at the Brick-House Hospital we met Dr. Steiner, who told us that the Commission had that morning opened a store-house at Sharpsburgh, so that the most pressing wants, except those of shelter, were, doubtless, met soon after.

As upon previous occasions, I was impressed with the diligence and devotion of the surgeons, and the liberality and energy of the Medical Department, which was represented by the Surgeon-General in person, and Drs. Mussey and Vollum, Medical Inspectors.

We reached Hagerstown upon our return, at 11 P. M., Monday, when, to my surprise, I learned that none of our stores had yet arrived.

Previous to leaving on Sunday afternoon, I had the thirteen casks of liquors stored in the freight-house of the C. V. R. R., in charge of Major Allen, General Superintendent of the road, who assured me that they would be safely kept there, but would give me no receipt for them. Upon Tuesday I was desired by Dr. Smith, Medical Director, to take charge of a train containing 347 wounded men and conduct them to Harrisburgh. After many delays, the train was started at 3 P. M., and was compelled to lay by at several points to wait the passage of other trains. At Shippenburgh and Carlisle, it was met by the ladies of those places, and the wounded were most abundantly supplied with tea, coffee, fruit, bread and butter, &c. The enthusiasm of the ladies was wonderful. They were clamorous that the wounded should be left among them to be nursed and feasted, and when they could no longer find any one to eat and drink their good things, they gathered in groups and sang the "Star-Spangled Banner," and the "Red, White, and Blue," which was answered by the men with cheers for the flag and cheers for General McClellan.

At Chambersburgh, I met Dr. Crane, and gave him a history of what had fallen under my observation, and we conferred as to his future operations. The train arrived in Harrisburgh at 1 A. M. on Wednesday, and I

proceeded to Philadelphia, where I made my report to Mr. Stille, and learned from him that he had been apprised that our stores had been lost sight of by Dr. Cole, at Harrisburgh, on the previous Friday, and were still remaining there, or at some station on the Cumberland Valley Railroad, with an assurance from the superintendent that he would see them forwarded immediately.

Arriving in New York at 4 P. M., I reported to the New York Executive Committee, and was instructed by them to prepare the above hasty report, and deliver it to them this day (Thursday, Sept. 25th), in charge for you.

The disbursements on account of the Commission, upon this excursion, amounted to \$44.74, as per memorandum annexed, which I paid from my own purse.

As my services on this occasion were volunteered, I do not propose to make an account with the Commission for my own time.

It is proper that I should acknowledge the very efficient aid rendered me by Messrs. Smith, Corson, and Ellis, of Philadelphia, and Mr. Coleman, of Lebanon, Pa., who placed themselves at my command while in Hagerstown, and accompanied me to the field.

Respectfully submitted,

W. M. CHAMBERLAIN, M. D.,

(Late Sanitary Inspector.)

## II.—LETTER FROM MR. OLMSTED.

WASHINGTON, September 23.

"To DR. BELLOWS, President,—Sir: I enclose Dr. Agnew's letter. We have sent him, since the army of Virginia went to meet the invaders, that is, within ten days:

"28,763 pieces of dry goods, shirts, towels, bedticks, pillows, &c.; 30 barrels old linen bandages and lint; 3,188 pounds farina; 2,626 pounds condensed milk; 5,000 pounds beef stock and canned meats; 3,000 bottles wine and cordials, and several tons of lemons and other fruit, crackers, tea, sugar, rubber cloth, tin cups, and hospital conveniences.

"We are sending more forward constantly. Four thousand sets of hospital clothing will, by special train from New York, get through to Frederick to-morrow, if money and energy can break through the obstructions of this embarrassed transportation.

"Your daily supplies from New York are reaching us regularly.

"Respectfully yours,

"F. L. OLMSTED."

## III.—LETTER FROM DR. AGNEW.

SANITARY COMMISSION DEPOT, }  
 Frederick, Md., September 22d, 1862. }

My Dear Sir,—I cannot now give you a report of all our doings since last Wednesday night, but it will give you joy to know that we have given some aid and comfort to *over five thousand wounded*. I left Washington, as you know, on Wednesday at midnight. Arriving at the break in the railroad at Monocacy, Dr. Harris and I walked on to Frederick, where I found Dr. Steiner, our Inspector, working with great zeal and efficiency. The demand for our supplies was so pressing that it was thought best to open a store-house at once, and Dr. Steiner procured one near the railroad station, in anticipation of the reconstruction of the bridge over the Monocacy, and the resumption of steam transportation. Frederick will be the great depot for the wounded, whence they will be distributed to Washington and Baltimore, and hence the necessity of giving Dr. Steiner large supplies of hospital stores. Dr. Harris remained at Frederick to hasten up supplies, and I pushed on on horseback with Dr. Vollum to Middletown, and quartered with a clergyman of the Dutch Reformed persuasion. I was thoroughly wet, and although compelled to sleep in my wet clothes, did not suffer. I found Dr. Thompson, Assistant Surgeon, acting Medical Director, at Middletown, and all the churches and public buildings filled with the wounded of Sunday's battle.

I was greatly delighted by the evidences of Dr. Thompson's efficiency and humanity. Dr. Letterman, McClellan's Medical Director, had left Dr. Thompson at Middletown, with full power to act, and by so doing certainly made a most unexceptionable selection of an officer to perform most delicate and onerous duties. Fifteen hundred of our wounded have enjoyed his humane and self-denying ministrations.

No additional medical supplies having arrived for Dr. Thompson, I desired him to take them from the Sanitary Commission wagons as they came. He had previously obtained many essential articles of food, &c., from our advanced train. I left him twenty-five dollars to be used in purchasing such things as we had not, to replenish his deficient stores. Early on Friday morning I went on to Keedysville, and to General McClellan's head-quarters. About noon (Friday, 19th) Dunning arrived with his wagon, and early on the evening of Friday, Mitchell and his train of wagons; on Saturday morning Dr. Brink and Mr. Peverly arrived, and now our stores of stimulants, condensed food, bandages, etc., became abundant.

Dunning and myself went out with stores of beef-stock, stimulants, and surgical dressings, as soon as he arrived, and visited barns and farm-houses within a mile and a half from head-quarters, and carried some relief to nearly two thousand wounded. Everywhere we were asked for chloroform and opiates, instruments and bed-pans, and everything, in fact, required for the wounded, except the coarser food furnished by the Commissary, and the comforts provided to the extent of their ability by the inhabitants, who had been previously nearly stripped by the rebels.

It should be remembered that so rapid was the movement of the army through Washington after the disaster and losses of the Virginia campaign, that the regimental and brigade and division medical officers, could not, to any considerable extent, replenish their exhausted supplies.

The medical supplies sent to meet the emergency on Wednesday, did not begin to arrive on the battle-field until Saturday afternoon, and then in small quantity, and entirely inadequate. Many of the same supplies are still here, (at Frederick,) awaiting transportation, while the Commission has had at least four wagon trains sent to the front that left Washington subsequent to Wednesday afternoon, in addition to two sent before in anticipation of the battle. You can estimate at your office the number of wagons we have sent forward, including Hay's trains, which will be on the battle-field this afternoon. As soon as Brink and Mitchell and Parsons arrived on the battle-field, I sent them over radii, previously ascertained to be within the circle of the late battles. They will be able to state personally the fields of their operations, as I desired them to keep notes. I left Dunning's wagon—in fact all the two-horse wagons and ambulances of our train—constantly going, and carrying relief to thousands of wounded.

The wounded were mainly clustered about barns, occupying the barn-yards, and floors, and stables, having plenty of good straw, well broken by the power threshing machine. I saw fifteen hundred wounded men lying upon the straw about two barns, within sight of each other ! Indeed, there is not a barn, or farm-house, or store, or church, or school-house, between Boonesborough, Keedysville, and Sharpsburgh, and the latter and Smoke-town, that is not gorged with wounded—rebel and union. Even the corn-cribs, and in many instances the cow-stable, and in one place the mangers were filled. Several thousands lie in the open air upon straw, and all are receiving the kind services of the farmers' families and the surgeons.

I hope I never shall forget the evidences everywhere manifested of the unselfish and devoted heroism of our surgeons, regular and volunteer, in the care of both Federal and rebel wounded. Wherever I went I encountered surgeons and chaplains who had given themselves no rest in view of the overwhelming claims of suffering humanity ; General McClellan's

Medical Director had several times been over the field, and given personal direction to the labors of the surgeons, and Dr. Rauch, U. S. A., and others, were everywhere actively engaged.

General McClellan moved his headquarters from Keedysville on Saturday to Sharpsburgh. Just here I cannot avoid introducing an illustration of the pressing necessity of some means of independent transportation for the medical officers. Everything was carried away to the new camp ground within two hours after the tents were struck—*except the medical stores*—they remained a solitary pile in the midst of a deserted camp, for nearly twenty-four hours awaiting transportation.

Having studied the field and the relations of the clusters of wounded to a central point, I took on Saturday a store at Sharpsburgh, hiring it of a Union citizen of the name of Cronise. On Saturday evening I brought up the mule teams of Peverley to Sharpsburgh. On Sunday morning, Dunning, Mitchell, Parsons, and myself, unpacked the boxes and filled the shelves and bins. I took charge of the wagons on Saturday night, because Dunning, Brink, and Mitchell were out with relief, to the right and left, for about three thousand wounded; and Parsons had gone back, under instructions from Medical Director Letterman, and my approval, to Birkettsville with relief to five hundred and forty wounded.

To finish the store business, I may say that I have left Parsons and Peverley, and a clerk of Mr. Cronise, incharge of the Sharpsburgh store, taking care to provide, out of our trains, a wagon and a saddle-horse for Dr. Dunning, and the same for Dr. Brink. I have given them written instructions to use the saddle horses to explore the barn-yards and hamlets of the country, and the wagons to accompany with stores of food, stimulants, bandages, clothing, &c. &c.

Our plans, so far, are working splendidly, thanks to the vigor with which you at Washington have crowded forward supplies, and the aid given by Dr. Letterman and his medical officers. We have been ahead of every one, and at least two days ahead of the supplies of the Medical Bureau; the latter fact due to its want of independent transportation. A single item will show the value of our supplies; we have given out over thirty pounds of chloroform within three days after the battle. The medical authorities had not one hundredth part of what was needed, and in many places important operations were necessarily neglected and life lost. *Our chloroform saved at least fifty lives, and saved several hundred from the pain of severe operations.* The want of chloroform was the most serious deficiency in the regular medical supplies, and as the result, amputations which should have been primary will now be secondary or impossible. (The mortality from secondary amputations is very much greater than from primary.)

But everything in the way of medical supplies was deficient; poor fellows, with lacerated and broken thighs, had to be carried out of barns into the open fields to answer a call of nature; men, suffering the agony of terrible wounds, were without opiates; tourniquets were wanting in many instances; stimulants very deficient; concentrated food also scanty; in fact, everything was wanting that wounded men need, except a place to lie down, and the attentions of personally devoted surgeons (without proper stores, however). The deficiency was greater than usual for two reasons,—one, the hurry of the army in passing from a campaign in which everything in the way of supplies was exhausted or lost; the other, the obstruction of the Monocacy, and the want of independent transportation on the part of the Bureau, which would have enabled it to send by the turnpike. Some blame for the non arrival of the medical stores, lies in the fact that of all the surgeons, forty or more sent, no one considered himself charged with the function of hurrying anything forward but himself; the result being, that plenty of surgeons got upon the ground, but almost destitute of necessary appliances; this I also attribute, not so much to the want of zeal on the part of the surgeons, or of ability to recognize the emergency, but to the inability on the part of the Central Bureau to command the necessary transportation. I venture to say, that nearly every barn and hospital, and cluster of wounded over the wide extent of the late military operations, embracing a circle of nearly thirty miles, was receiving most essential relief from the Commission while the regular medical stores lay at Monocacy Bridge. I solemnly affirm that great loss of life has occurred and will occur, among the wounded, as the direct result of an inability on the part of the medical authorities to furnish, by rapid and independent means of transportation, the surgical and medical appliances needed within the two days immediately subsequent to the battles.

When will our rulers learn wisdom and humanity? I do not ask for the Medical Bureau means of transportation entirely independent of, and above those of the Quartermaster's department, but I do demand such conveyances as shall enable the medical officers, moving with an army in line of battle, to carry forward surgeons and such surgical materials as chloroform, opiates, stimulants, and the primary dressings; a few supply carts, in addition to the ordinary medicine wagons would meet almost any emergency. Let such carts be light one-horse wagons upon springs, so constructed as to be easily drawn past or through the army trains that seriously obstruct the approaches to battle-fields. Had Dr. Letterman had under his control one dozen one-horse supply wagons, he could have sent to every part of the field the supplies most in demand. If Government will

not give to the Medical Bureau such a train, I insist that *we* must do it. The Commission can have no higher object than to strengthen the hands of our army surgeons who now strive so hard to perform the most exhausting duties with so few appliances.

But I must draw this hasty scrawl to a close. As I said, Mitchell I have ordered back with Harry and Collins to open a depot at Boonesboro'. We now need hospital clothing more than anything else. I should say, send two thousand shirts and drawers to Frederick, fifteen hundred to Boonesboro', and four thousand to Sharpsburgh. As to other supplies, await telegraphic orders; we have now, I think, with the wagons met last night, enough for several days, of food, stimulants, and surgical dressings.

Mr. Platt remains here for the present, his services have been most valuable; we must retain him until the press is over. I shall never cease saying God bless you all for your efforts in sending forward the relief to the wounded.

I cannot close this hasty letter without expressing my sense of obligations to Dr. Letterman for unusual facilities, and to all the surgeons with whom I came in contact, for their uniform courtesy and confidence. The country should be proud of those faithful men, who labor day and night to alleviate the sufferings of the battle, without hope of "honorable mention" or a "brevet," in this world; may they have their reward in the next world, where the fact of having given a cup of cold water to a suffering human being, will be made the occasion of a never fading record and an exhaustless blessing.

Yours, most sincerely,

C. R. AGNEW.

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#### IV.

NEW YORK, Sept. 27, '62.

Dear Sir—I have to report that while at Hagerstown, on the 22d, I was applied to by the Medical Director there, Dr. A. K. Smith, for aid to fit up and furnish his hospitals. The floor of the Lyceum and the floor and benches of the court-house were covered with suffering and severely wounded men. Berths or bunks and bedding were urgently needed, and much work was necessary to put the building into proper order. The shortest way of doing this was to hire workmen at once, and for this, money was necessary. As it was perfectly evident that every hour's delay involved severe suffering, and seemed likely, so far as I could form an opinion, to endanger the lives of those most severely hurt, I deemed it

right to advance to Dr. Smith the necessary amount from the funds of the Commission, and accordingly deposited six hundred dollars to his credit with the Hagerstown Bank. His memorandum of the application of the money is returned herewith.

Mr. Horace Binney concurred with me as to the propriety of doing this, and I hope my action will be approved by the Executive Committee.

I beg to add that I saw at Hagerstown and Sharpsburgh, and at the hospitals on the field of Antietam creek, the most abundant and gratifying evidences of the activity with which our inspectors and agents were doing their duty, and of the essential service they were rendering the army.

Very respectfully and truly, yours,

GEO. T. STRONG,  
Treasurer.

Rev. H. W. BELLOW, D. D.

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#### V.—FOR THE SICK AND WOUNDED.

Under an order from the President of the United States, a national system has been established by the Sanitary Commission for the safe transmission and judicious distribution of articles contributed by the people for the sick and wounded of the army and navy. The system, after being well tried, has been formally approved and recommended by the President, the General-in-Chief, and the Surgeon-General. The security it offers against misappropriation is practically perfect, until the contributions are delivered in the hospitals, where they necessarily pass from the control of the Commission. Of more than a million articles sent through one of the largest of its channels of supply, it has been ascertained that not one hundred have miscarried or been dishonestly used. Discreet and trustworthy agents are constantly employed in visiting all divisions of the army, including those on the southern coast, the Mississippi, and the Western frontier, to observe their wants; to direct supplies where they are most needed, and to secure, as far as practicable, their honest use. The Commission does not undertake to deliver articles to individuals, and declines to receive contributions with any restriction as to their destination within the limits of the force employed in the service of the nation, it being one of its secondary objects to strengthen the sentiments of national unity wherever it can come in antagonism with State or local pride.

The distribution of hospital supplies is but a branch of the work of the Commission. It employs the best professional talent which can be obtained in the country to aid its larger purpose—to do all that is possible for the health and vigor of our fighting men, to lighten their burdens, reduce their encumbrances, and to sustain their spirits under the privations and hardships which are an essential part of successful warfare.

For this purpose, contributions to its treasury are solicited. They may be directed to the Treasurer, G. T. Strong, Esq., 68 Wall street, New York.

*Commissioners under appointment from the President of the United States.*

The Rev. HENRY W. BELLOWES, D. D., New York.

Prof. A. D. BACHE, LL.D., Washington.

GEORGE W. CULLUM, U. S. A. “

ALEXANDER E. SHIRAS, U. S. A., Washington.

ROBERT C. WOOD, M. D., U. S. A., “

WILLIAM H. VAN BUREN, M. D., New York.

WOLCOTT GIBBS, M. D., New York.

SAMUEL G. HOWE, M. D., Boston.

CORNELIUS R. AGNEW, M. D., New York.

ELISHA HARRIS, M. D., New York.

J. S. NEWBERRY, M. D., Cleveland.

GEORGE T. STRONG, New York.

HORACE BINNEY, Jr., Philadelphia.

The Right Rev. THOS. M. CLARK, D. D., Providence, Rhode Island.

The Hon. JOSEPH HOLT, Kentucky.

R. W. BURNETT, Cincinnati.

The Hon. MARK SKINNER, Chicago.

FREDERICK LAW OLMTED, New York.

Contributions of suitable supplies for the sick and wounded will be received AT THE ROOMS OF THE WOMAN'S CENTRAL RELIEF ASSOCIATION, No. 10 THIRD AVENUE, COOPER UNION, NEW YORK.

CENTRAL OFFICE, SANITARY COMMISSION, }  
Washington, September 20, 1862. }

The Sanitary Commission, at the request of General Halleck, Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the United States, most earnestly advises against the practice of sending presents to soldiers of articles which it is supposed

will add to the convenience of their camp-life. To the knowledge of the Commission, many hundred tons of such presents are now piled uselessly in storehouses and yards, and upon old camp-grounds; while thousands have probably been destroyed to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy, and but a small part of all that have been received by those to whom they were addressed have been of the smallest value to them, except as tokens of the affectionate interest of their friends. For this purpose, letters and such other small and light articles as can be transmitted by mail would have been much better. Large gifts occasion serious practical mischief—men and officers being naturally averse to throwing them away—they add to the encumbrances, which are a chief cause of the excessive fatigue and thus of the sickness of the soldier. Volunteers almost universally, until they learn better by dear-bought experience, undertake to carry an excessive amount of clothing. To this cause, and to the excessive baggage of their officers, some of the severest losses of the Union forces in the present war are attributed by the highest military authority. But even when successful in battle, the attempt to secure comfort by the possession of an unusual amount of clothing is nearly always frustrated; the heaviest knapsack being thrown away at the first long-continued hard march, while the light one is retained, and the long and heavily laden wagon train cut off, when the light and short one is protected. Similar observations apply to regimental hospitals. The hospital of a regiment in the field should be supplied with nothing but the barest necessities for the temporary treatment of the sick, who, in all serious cases, are removed as fast as possible to general hospitals, where the supplies of the regiment are not available. An excessive amount of regimental hospital stores and conveniences is a cruelty to the sick and wounded, for it occasions the frequent detention and separation from the regiment of the new articles essential to the usefulness of the surgeon. The Commission has from the first protested against a common error of surgeons in this respect, as well as against the greater evil of the common attempt of the volunteers to carry into the field too many of the means of comfort to which they are habituated in civil life. In compliance with the request of General Halleck, this appeal is addressed to those by whose mistaken kindness both these evils are believed to have been greatly aggravated and sustained.

FRED. LAW OLMSTED,  
General Secretary.